

First 5 Plumas

Children and Families Commission

Minutes

Wednesday, March 12, 2003

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Attendees:

Commissioners: Carol Burney, Tami Davison, Bill Dennison, Klytia Dutton, Carmen Lopez, Shelley Miller, Paula Russell, Rita Scardaci, and Elliot Smart

Staff: Ellen Vieira, Executive Director; Diana Conen, staff

Public: Kathy Davis, Roger Nielsen, Kandi Whitley, Holly Henson, Dave Carey, and Jaye Bruce

I. Introductions:

Chairperson Miller called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. The Commissioners and meeting attendees introduced themselves.

II. Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

III. Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: Mr. Dennison, seconded by Ms. Burney, moved to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2003 meeting as written. **VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.**

IV. First 5 Plumas Video Presentation:

The Commissioners and meeting attendees viewed the video highlighting the First 5 Plumas funded programs. The twelve-minute video is intended to inform the viewer of the history of the Plumas County Commission, the accomplishments to date, and what it hopes to accomplish in the future. Commissioner Dennison noted the recent research on the first years of a child's life and the impact on brain development. Commissioner Scardaci stated that the video serves three purposes: 1) The new First 5 Plumas name change and logo 2) highlighting funded programs 3) to emphasize school readiness. The video will be used as a public awareness tool and presented to the Plumas County Board of Supervisors and other community forums. Commissioner Dennison would also like the Plumas County Board of Supervisors to be added to the First 5 Plumas list of partners. Ms. Vieira stated that the video could easily be edited or expanded.

Commissioner Lopez commented that the WIC program would be available to partner with the School Readiness Program through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Director Vieira

stated that a formal MOU would not be required from WIC as a general MOU was signed through Plumas Rural Services. Ms. Vieira acknowledged the valuable partnership between WIC and the First 5 Plumas Children and Families Commission.

V. Executive Director's Report:

Rural County Allocations: Director Vieira continues to participate on the California Children and Families Association (CCAFA) fiscal workgroup. The minimum allocations to 8 small population counties (including Plumas) and the administrative/travel funds for 31 rural counties are due to end June 30, 2004. The fiscal workgroup includes the executive directors of Nevada, Plumas, Alameda, Mendocino, and Orange counties. A proposal is currently being developed through CCAFA and the State Commission staff to continue these allocations and ensure that Proposition 10 remains a statewide initiative. Ms. Vieira will be attending state meetings on March 18th and 19th in Sacramento. The fiscal workgroup will be meeting next week to develop a timeline for the proposal and subsequent presentation to the State Commission.

Oral Health Screenings through the Regional Oral Health Project for children ages 0-5 have been completed in Sierra County and will be completed in Plumas County by March 31st. Through the Regional Oral Health Project a concept paper has been developed by consultant Beverly Isman. Lassen, Sierra, and Plumas counties will submit an application for foundation funding within the next two months. Director Vieira reported that the Eastern Slope Oral Health Alliance (7 counties) is working together to investigate the possibility of participating in the State Commission's oral health initiative. Through the Regional Oral Health Project, Francisco Gomez, DDS, will provide a two-day provider training in Plumas County April 11-12, 2003. Lassen County and Ms. Vieira will be coordinating the training and notify the Commissioners of the schedule in two weeks.

First 5 Plumas Financial Plan: the Executive Director is currently developing a ten-year financial plan with assistance of TASC fiscal consultant Bobbie Riley. A financial plan ad hoc committee consisting of Director Vieira, and Commissioners Scardaci, Dennison, and Smart will meet in March to finalize the draft financial plan that will be submitted to the full Commission in May. The plan will provide a framework for the Commission's annual budget and used as a guideline for the funding allocation.

Draft letter to State Legislators was distributed to the Commissioners for review. Presentation to the Plumas County Supervisors with a resolution is planned for April. The Commissioners discussed the content of the letter and what the goal of the letter should be. Commissioner Scardaci stated that the goal of the letter is to focus on outcomes for children rather than the method of funding individual programs. Commissioner Dennison said that the letter could be sent separately from the BOS resolution, as recent developments regarding vehicle license fee are very fluid. Commissioner Scardaci said that the letter could be sent to the legislators first and then to the Board of Supervisors for support. The subject of program realignment was also discussed. Commissioner Smart stated if the realignment proposal does not happen what other alternative (possibly more harmful) would take its place? Commissioner Smart also stated that funding discussions pits consumer groups against one another and that a guarantee of baseline funding is possible through maintenance of effort plan.

Commissioner Dennison questioned whether the budget proposal would primarily impact low-income families. Commissioner Scardaci stated that low-income families would be primarily impacted and cited the reduction of provider Medi-Cal reimbursements.

Commissioner Scardaci provided the following recommendation and directive to Commission staff. The Executive Director stated that no motion was needed, as the Commission at the February 10, 2003 meeting previously acted on the letter.

- 1) A generic letter advocating for children should be sent at earliest possible time, then send another letter(s) with more specific focused arguments regarding legislative solutions
- 2) Place resolution on Board of Supervisors agenda for April 1st
- 3) Place on the Commission agenda for the next few months for further discussion

Additional Commissioner comments/directives:

Commissioner Miller directed staff to remove the “attached resolution” paragraph.

Commissioner Lopez suggested instead of low-income, “families affected by First 5 program” should be used

Commissioner Smart suggested that a list of programs that will be affected would be helpful to determine which will affect the 0-5 population the most. Local stakeholders and community members should meet and discuss.

Commissioner Scardaci noted that the Health and Human Services Cabinet meetings also discuss the impact of State budget cuts.

Chairperson Miller directed staff to add this item to the April agenda.

VI. Program Development:

Ms. Vieira provided copies of the “draft” School Readiness proposal to the meeting attendees. Ms. Vieira thanked everyone who participated in the school readiness planning process. The planning was very inclusive and included a five-month grass roots countywide assessment. Many meetings had 25-30 attendees representing parents, schools, and programs that serve children and families. The Executive Director acknowledged the work of all the planning partners in developing surveys, conducting focus groups, gathering data, distributing surveys, discussing child assessments, and the on-going commitments to work together. For many it was the first time sitting down to discuss what children need to succeed in school, how early childhood educators and school district can partner to provide a smooth transition to kindergarten. Ms. Vieira reviewed the specific criteria that had to be followed: 1) programs must be school linked or based 2) must incorporate the 5 essential elements 3) must address priority school (Greenville Elementary) and special factor school (C. Roy Carmichael) 4) serve children with special needs and disabilities, and diverse populations 5) identify existing services to avoid duplication 6) incorporate best practices and research based models.

The main strategy that emerged through the assessment process was home visitation. Ms. Vieira stated that the final draft of the School Readiness program represents the input from parents, schools, day care providers, agencies, teachers, and early childhood educators. The final draft of the proposal provides a continuum of early care and education and school transition for children 0-5 utilizing a home visitation approach to target high-risk families, children with special needs/disabilities, and culturally diverse families (see attached School Readiness proposal). Other

strategies include: 1) parent education 2) Teacher/ECE workgroup 3) parent advisory councils 4) Raising a Reader program case management 5) inclusive governance/participation.

The following Questions/Answers/Comments are in response to the “draft” Plumas County School Readiness Program proposal.

Question: Commissioner Miller: What new direct services are going to be provided through this proposal?

Answer: Director Vieira: New Born House Calls (NBHC) Home Visitation Program will be expanded to serve children ages 0-3 and their families. NBHC is a nursing model home visitation program initially funded by the Commission FY 01/02 to distribute the Kit for New Parents. The Commission funded a nursing model program to provide professional oversight of home visitation and case management services, with the intension of expanding the program when appropriate. A Home Visiting Task Group has been developed through NBHC and working through the existing task group, the program will add a school readiness, child development, and a health component to the existing home visitation services.

The Healthy Start Family Advocate home visitation services will be expanded, and the Healthy Start case management service delivery model that is currently being used by the school district will be utilized. Through the assessment process, teachers and parents alike also identified health education relating to hygiene, nutrition, and oral health care. School Readiness funds have been budgeted for parent education and health education.

Director Vieira reviewed the justification for the two targeted school communities. Greenville Elementary is considered an under-performing school according to the baseline 1999 API score (4) and is classified as the priority school in Plumas County. Special factors have been identified in Eastern Plumas County, namely the existence of an emerging Latino population, served by C. Roy Carmichael School. According to the current data, 10 percent of the students attending C. Roy Carmichael Elementary School are Latino.

To serve Latino children and families, the Literacy Program in Portola (currently serving 40 Latino families) will be expanded. Strategies include: 1) hiring a bilingual family advocate through the school district; 2) translation/translator services; 3) school readiness component; 4) school/community family cultural activities; 5) parent education; 6) case management for high-risk families; and 7) toddler health faire

There is also a countywide school readiness component that will include public education and awareness through an education/marketing work group and on-going communication between early childhood educators and early elementary teachers.

Question: Commissioner Miller: If NBHC provides home visitation to age 3, what happens for children 3-5?

Answer: Director Vieira: The Home Visiting Task Group will link existing home visiting services through referrals from the resource center or other programs. Not every family will want or require continuing home visits. The kindergarten teachers in Greenville will offer a home visit to all

entering kindergarten children and families. Commissioner Scardaci: NBHC will offer multiple home visits during first three years of a child's life. The system will then identify any of those children/families who may need additional assistance through home visitation. Director Vieira: The Healthy Start case management system will offer referral and continued support through the school linked resource center. On-going Teacher/ECE work group will develop protocols and child assessments and the method of implementation.

Question: Commissioner Dutton: Rural isolation has been identified as a problem, how is this addressed?

Answer: Director Vieira: Because of the geographical isolation of the communities in Plumas County; isolation will always be a factor in reaching families. The home visitation services will go directly to families and will be tailored to fit their needs. Information regarding school readiness services/programs will be publicized through a media/marketing plan. The community in Indian Valley is directly connected to the existing Healthy Start resource center, which will serve as the hub of school readiness. The Parent Advisory Councils will also provide parents with the tools to develop their own solutions regarding service access.

Question: Commissioner Miller: Middle-income families don't necessarily qualify for services or subsidies for pre-school. How will these children be identified and included in the program?

Answer: Director Vieira: Several strategies will be utilized to identify and provide outreach to these children/families: public education, community events, and outreach through media/marketing. Approximately 20 children were identified in Indian Valley who does not qualify for the state pre-school. According to the cost analysis, creating a new pre-school would not be a cost effective use of school readiness funds. There are also not enough children to guarantee the required 20 slots necessary to fund an additional pre-school. The state pre-school is full at this time and is unable to expand the program. School readiness will be provided through home visitation utilizing the Raising a Reader Program, existing playgroups for socialization, and parent education. The Parent Advisory Council will also be able to address this problem and provide solutions that fit the needs of families and the broader community. All of the programs/services provided by the School Readiness Program are not linked to income and therefore will allow a great deal of flexibility.

Question: Commissioner Scardaci: Is the School Readiness proposal a structured framework or is there flexibility with the plan after the State Commission approves it?

Answer: Director Vieira: The State Commission has provided each county with the flexibility to review and evaluate what is working and make changes when necessary. The Parent Advisory Councils and the governance structure will provide the mechanism to evaluate and develop programs/services that are tailored to the needs of each school community.

Question: Commissioner Burney: Will the Mental Health Department do the "challenging behaviors" training?

Answer: Director Vieira: Funds for mental health training have been budgeted FY 04/05 and 05/06. The training needs/methods will be developed through the Teacher/ECE workgroup and the

collaboration of the county Mental Health Department. After the training is identified, it may require bringing the training into the county through a mental health consultant/trainer.

Question: PUSD administrative staff- Kathy Davis: In the budget narrative under in kind contributions, it states that each school site will provide a classroom for the program. Will the classroom be used exclusively for the School Readiness Program?

Answer: Director Vieira: No, the schools will provide a classroom on an as-needed basis only.

Question: Commissioner Dutton: On page 18, the indicators listed do not seem to be tied to funded programs. Can you explain how the strategies support these indicators?

Answer: Director Vieira: Each of the indicators listed are directly tied to a funded program/service. The trainings/protocols/assessments will be developed through established workgroups. Through the assessment process parents have indicated the need for parent education, assistance in parenting, nutrition, hygiene, and oral health education. The Parent Advisory Councils will further develop the exact method of implementation. The indicators were identified through the home visiting services, parent education, health/developmental assessments, and early intervention etc.

Commissioner Scardaci: Yes, the evaluation methods and indicators must be in place at the beginning.

Comment: Commissioner Miller: The plan is based on a collaborative effort and the assumption that participating agencies will continue to be funded at the same level as now. If that is not the case, we may need to revise the funding assumptions.

Comment: Director Vieira: The budget is based on the current level of Commission funding and that of participating agencies. Budgets will be reviewed and revised as necessary on an annual basis.

Comment: Commissioner Scardaci: The plan is fluid and we may need to revisit as necessary.

Comment: Commissioner Burney: On page 25, it should state “at risk of” developmental delays.

Question: PUSD administrative staff-Kathy Davis: The summer transition program is a three-week program, what will be planned for the additional week?

Answer: Director Vieira: The additional week will provide an opportunity for parents to participate in parent education classes and allow for services to be provided on an as needed basis.

Question: Commissioner Burney: Are the developmental assessments conducted during Kindergarten Roundup scheduled for this spring?

Answer: Director Vieira: Kindergarten Roundup will take place in May 03 and the summer transition program is scheduled for July 03. The Teacher/ECE workgroup will develop and plan for the assessments FY 03-04.

Comment: PUSD administrative staff-Kathy Davis: On page 34, Portola Elementary School should be changed to C. Roy Carmichael School.

Comment: Kandi Whitely, Healthy Start Coordinator: On page 37, the County Office of Education needs to be changed to PUSD.

Comment: Commissioner Miller: The reliance on workgroups is an enormous volunteer commitment and the desired results will not be accomplished quickly.

Comment: Commissioner Miller: The summer kindergarten transition program is a band-aid approach to things that should have, but have not taken place before. As the School Readiness Program progresses, I would hope the need for it will be reduced.

School Readiness Budget: Director Vieira reviewed the attached budget forms 4A-4C.

Comment: Commissioner Scardaci directed Commission staff to place the School Readiness budget on the April agenda for discussion.

MOTION: Mr. Dennison, seconded by Ms. Russell, moved to approve the School Readiness Program Application for submission to the First 5 California Commission. **VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.**

Comment: Chairperson Miller directed Commission staff to place the School Readiness Program coordination as it relates to the duties of the Executive Director on the April agenda for discussion/action.

VII. Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

VIII. Next Meetings: April 9, 2003
May 7, 2003

IX. Adjournment:

MOTION: Ms. Davison, seconded by Ms. Russell, moved to adjourn the meeting. **VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Diana Conen.